

DUCKTALES – THE QUACK IS BACK!
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Welcome back to DUCKBURG, USA. It's still as you remember it, life is still like a hurricane, race cars, yadda-yadda, air-o-planes, plenty of "Whee-oo!" and all that...

Nutty inventor GYRO GEARLOOSE is still creating screwball contraptions...

Ace pilot LAUNCHPAD McQUACK is still confidently strutting away from plane crashes...

Lucky duck GLADSTONE GANDER is still finding diamond rings under every four-leaf clover...

The villainous BEAGLE BOYS are still blasting open everything from bank doors to gumball machines...

And SCROOGE McDUCK is still the richest duck in the world.

Truly, some things never change. High on its hill in the center of town, McDuck's fabulous money bin is still bursting at the seams with cash, coins and assorted treasures, and Scrooge still relies on his devoted, adventure-loving grand-nephews HUEY, DEWEY and LOUIE DUCK to accompany him on wild, comical, action-filled journeys to the four corners of the Earth.

But there have also been some changes. Sure, there have been tech upgrades to everyday life, cell phones, Waddle (AKA Google) Glasses, autopilot jets that can actually survive Launchpad McQuack's seat of the pants landings and such, but there's also a new approach we can adopt when it comes to telling stories about our web-footed stars...

THE FORMAT

The world of Ducktales is so varied, rich, and yet, well-known that our series could accommodate a variety of storytelling formats, from multi-part epics to twenty-two minute stand alone episodes to two straight comedy eleven minute cartoons. It all depends on the type of stories we're looking to tell.

THE EPICS

These would be big, multi-part adventures that could span anywhere from three to five 22 minute segments. This is where we would do our REALLY BIG stories, time travel, flying to alien planets, around the world quests, etc. Doing multi-parters gives us a chance to cut loose and do some huge adventure/comedy epics that bring in our extended cast as well as our regular heroes and villains, and introduce some new characters as well.

Also, the episodes could easily be edited together and presented as potential Ducktales features.

An ideal way to reintroduce Ducktales to the world would be to kick off with a big multi-part story event. This would serve as a jumping on point to new viewers, and also bring long-time fans up to speed with what has been happening to the Duck clan since we last saw them. For example, we could kick off our new series with a big story titled:

“WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SCROOGE McDUCK?”

We open on Duckburg. It's pretty much as we remember it, only something seems different -- not as brightly-colored as it once was, maybe even a bit seedy-looking and run-down.

The city is not as friendly as we recall, either. The residents seem downcast, sad. In fact, there's a glum atmosphere that permeates the entire town.

Then, for the first time, we notice it...McDuck's Money Bin. The big **\$** in front is gone, replaced by a gigantic **B**. And coming from inside, the riotous laughter of... **THE BEAGLE BOYS?!?** What's goin' on?

Cut to a man getting a shoeshine. He watches a news program playing on TV in a store window. The program is giving a profile on the missing billionaire, Scrooge McDuck. In a style that comically recalls the opening of “Citizen Kane,” we get a fast history of Scrooge's origins...

His humble beginnings in Scotland. How he earned the lucky dime on which he'd build his fortune.

His adventures mining in the Klondike, and earning his fortunes in various money-making ventures around the world.

Scrooge's early battles with the Beagle Boy clan, including their patriarch, the villainous Blackheart Beagle.

Scrooge's establishment of his Money Bin in Duckburg, and later life with his family, long-lived Grandma Duck, nephews Donald and Gladstone, grand-nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie, and brother in law Ludwig Von Drake, and many friends including his faithful housekeeper, Mrs. Beakley, her niece Webby, loyal butler Duckworth and his adventuring companion, daredevil pilot, Launchpad McQuack.

Then, just as Scrooge's life was at its best...

Disaster! Devastation! Ruin!

While on a treasure hunt in the south seas, Scrooge's plane went down into the crater of an exploding volcano! Scrooge, Launchpad and the nephews escaped at the last second (Launchpad actually called it one of his better landings) but in the confusion, Scrooge's lucky #1 dime was last seen falling into the bubbling lava! Scrooge's charmed coin, the keystone of his fortune, was gone!

Since that moment, McDuck seemed to be living under a cursed cloud. Upon his return to Duckburg, the Beagle Boys produced a decades-old bill of sale showing that Scrooge had once bought the site of his money bin from their grandpa, Blackheart Beagle.

Scrooge didn't dispute the sale, he said that Blackheart selling him those worthless acres of scrubland was probably the only honest money the Beagle family ever earned. Ma Beagle says that's true – they even had the hundred-dollar bill framed and hanging in their hide-out. It wasn't until one of the Beagles took a closer look at the bill that they realized the truth --- the bill was counterfeit! Turns out that all those years ago Scrooge bought the land with phony money! Scrooge of course, denies the whole thing. He'd never deal with phony money, that is, knowingly. There must have been some mistake. Now the law has determined that Scrooge's seemingly ill-gotten land and everything on it, including his fortune, be turned over to the Beagle Boys!

In short order, Scrooge lost everything to the Beagles! In a cutaway interview, Bigtime Beagle thoughtfully says "It just don't seem right, after all dis time, takin' Scroogie's fortune away from him legal and all." Then the camera PANS BACK to show the entire Beagle clan living up in Scrooge's money bin. "But we took it anyway!" The Beagles cheer.

Since the Beagle Boys took control of Scrooge's empire, the crooks have basically taken over the town. The police turn a blind eye to the Beagle's antics (they are so wealthy they pay for anything they break) and the Beagles have even forced the Junior Woodchucks to disband. Anyone who was loyal to Scrooge or his family has been bought off, fired, or run out of town.

"And where is Scrooge McDuck now?" The TV reporter asks. The TV report concludes that no one has seen the deposed billionaire in months.

The man getting his shoes shined turns away from the TV. He complements the shiner on the good job and hands him a dime. "I've always tried to do my best, sir." An aged Scots voice answers. "Even when I was a wee bairn in Glasgow." The customer walks off, never realizing that shoeshine man was none other than Scrooge McDuck himself!

Yes, poor old Scrooge. Bumped back by a cruel twist of fate to his humble beginnings as a shoeshine boy. No fortune, no money bin, no mansion, no lucky dime, all he has to his name is his old shoe shine kit and a cot in his nephew Donald's leaky houseboat. But through it all he still has the love and esteem of his family, especially his three never say die grand-nephews.

The nephews have even taken jobs working for the Beagles polishing their (formerly Scrooge's) huge bin full of coins. It amuses the Beagles no end to have McDuck's nephews working for them, but the boys are actually keeping their ears and eyes open to discover some way that Scrooge can get his fortune back.

They get a lucky break when Gyro Gearloose stops by to deliver a vat of his special coin cleaner. Not only does this make coins extra-shiny, but it protects them from severe damage. When Gyro reveals that he tested the formula on Scrooge's number one dime, the boys realize there's a chance the lucky dime may have survived its fall into the boiling lava after all.

When they bring this news to Scrooge, the old duck's sense of adventure is rekindled. Maybe if he can just get his lucky dime back, then just maybe he can set everything right again.

This brings the entire Duck family and their allies together in a multi-part, globetrotting adventure to find Scrooge's dime. Gyro outfits Donald's houseboat with a super engine powerful enough to get it to the south seas. The nephews, Launchpad and Donald all act as crew. They even bring cousin Gladstone Gander along for luck in finding the dime. And they'll need all the luck they can get, for once they reach the site of the volcano, they discover it has sunk back beneath the ocean!

But all is not lost – the dime has been found by a tribe of sea-going mer-ducks who revere the mysterious dime as a magical token. Of course, now the difficulty will be for Scrooge and Co. to infiltrate the mer-ducks trained shark-infested waters and recover the lucky dime.

To make matters worse, the Beagle Boys have learned of Scrooge's mission. Fearful of McDuck reclaiming his fortune, they follow along, determined that Scrooge never finds his lucky dime. Of course, wherever Scrooge's lucky dime goes, sorceress Magica De Spell follows, and her magic has revealed to her that the dime still exists. She joins forces with the Beagles, promising she will use her sorcery to make sure the ducks never return to Duckburg, provided the Beagles give her Scrooge's lucky dime in payment.

This all leads to a big climax with all our heroes and villains in play trying to get the lucky dime and to escape the dangers of the watery underworld. In the end Scrooge succeeds, not because he gets the dime back (FYI, he does) but because he remembers that family and friends are the real things that make a man wealthy. The ducks and ducklings all pull together and make it safely back to Duckburg.

Of course when they return there is the little problem of the Beagles still being in possession of the Money Bin. Lucky dime or not, they still control Scrooge's fortune. It's at this time that great grandpa Blackheart Beagle is released from his long prison sentence. Arriving at the Money Bin, old great grandpa asks his relatives how they managed to finally get McDuck's fortune. The Beagles show Blackheart the phony hundred that Scrooge used to buy the land. Blackheart chuckles, saying "One of my best forgeries. Only I could tell it apart from the real thing." Blackheart admits that many

years ago he was a master counterfeiter who flooded Duckburg with phony bills. Scrooge must have unwittingly paid him with one of the fake hundreds. "Then you bilked yourself out of this land with your own funny money!" The Beagles exclaim. Blackheart says that didn't matter none, he was squatting on the hill, anyway. Yes, in true Beagle fashion, Blackheart never registered a claim on the property and it's still up for grabs. The Beagles realize if they can get to the property office and purchase the land before Scrooge, they can still own the Bin for real. Huey, Dewey and Louie beg Scrooge to race to the land office and register the claim. "Not necessary, lads." Scrooge says, pulling out a cell phone. A few taps and Scrooge has accessed his old accounts and paid for the property in full. "I have picked up a modern trick or two." Scrooge winks, patting his phone. Needless to say, the Beagles are soon cell-bound again, Duckburg is spruced up, the Junior Woodchucks are reinstated, and Scrooge and his family triumphantly return to McDuck mansion, ready for new adventures.

THE STAND-ALONES

When the ducks are not caught up in a big epic, other stories can be told in self-contained stand-alone episodes. This is the classic Ducktales format, and probably the format we will return to most often. These episodes will still feature plenty of the classic Ducktales adventure and comedy, and while they might involve treasure hunts and exotic locales, they can also tell fun character-centric stories about the Duck family. For instance:

"DONALD ON THE JOB"

Scrooge promises Donald a soft, cushy job in his company, provided his nephew starts in the entry level position of security guard. Huey, Dewey & Louie want to see Uncle Donald succeed, so they camp out secretly at the Money Bin to make sure Donald stays focused on the job – no napping, no texting, and especially no TV. It's a good thing they're there, too, for the Beagle Boys have also heard Don is guarding the Bin alone that night, and they figure he will be a push-over. What follows is a scenario right out of "Home Alone" as the nephews confuse, clobber and ultimately capture the Beagles one by one thanks to a string of cleverly-placed booby traps. In every scenario, the boys are just out of sight when another Beagle steps into another trap, so the thugs believe that Donald is doing it. Donald himself has his eyes and ears glued to his cell phone, watching a hockey match. Thanks to the nephews, when morning comes, an astonished Scrooge finds a pile of captured Beagles in his foyer. "I'm a better guard than I thought." Donald says, shrugging and simply accepting the situation. Later, Scrooge confides to the nephews that he had second thoughts about Donald's heroism and checked the security tapes just to make sure. Now Scrooge knows who really caught the Beagles. The boys are sad that Donald won't be getting the soft, cushy job that Scrooge promised, but Scrooge says he won't go back on his word. Donald is promoted to fluffing up big sacks of dollar bills in the money bin, so they're soft and cushy for Scrooge when he wants to nap on them.

THE SHORTS

For complete change of pace episodes, we could present two eleven-minute Ducktales shorts per episode. These could be mini-adventures that deal with Scrooge's escape from a crumbling treasure palace, or a change of pace story involving the Beagle Boys trying to go straight, or a Donald-Gladstone battle to please Uncle Scrooge on his birthday, or a reel of Launchpad's most spectacular crashes. The Ducktales world is so big and filled with so many fun characters that we could spotlight any one of them in a solo short cartoon. Much like the way the current Mickey Mouse TV shorts focus on an aspect of Mickey's life (dating, pets, hanging out with friends, etc.) the Ducktales characters could lend themselves to funny situations that would spark eleven minute comic mini-adventures.

NEW CHARACTER DIRECTIONS

Our leads are to a great degree their classic selves, but with a few modern twists. Here's a quick overview of where our stars are now:

SCROOGE McDUCK- Still the King Midas of waterfowl, and still with a passion for globetrotting adventure and treasure hunting that is matched only by his passions for saving money and bargains. Only lately there has been a change in Scrooge. He's come to realize that some treasures are best left where they are, in their native countries where they can be a part of that country's heritage. That won't stop him and the nephews from going after them, I'd just that he's more liable to give the treasure to a local museum where it can be enjoyed by all than lock it away in his own vaults. Most treasures are connected to history, and passing on the legends associated with those recovered objects means more to Scrooge than gold. He's got a bit more of the storyteller to his personality now. Also, he knows that if those treasures fell into the wrong hands, they would be locked up by some (Flintheart Glomgold), exploited by others, (The Beagle Boys) or, in the case of mystic artifacts, destructively misused (Magica DeSpell). Scrooge's new philosophy is: "There's native heritage to preserve and indigenous culture to celebrate..." then he adds with a sly wink, "not to mention significant tax write-offs for charitable donations." Okay, so maybe he hasn't changed that much.

HUEY, DEWEY and LOUIE – Not all that different as we remember them, each eternally about nine years old, each with the thirst for adventure, the proclivity for mischief, and the determination to help their Uncle Scrooge succeed in his latest quest. They are also frequently joined by Mrs. Beakley's grand-daughter, **WEBBY VANDERQUACK**. No longer a little girl dressed in pink, Webby (more so than H D & L) has aged up and adopted a tomboy attitude. She's taking karate class and she's good at it. She can match Huey, Dewey and Louie in agility, cleverness and pulling pranks. The nephews like her and treat her like "the fourth bro."

That glorious scouting organization **THE JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS** is still around and Huey, Dewey and Louie are still among its most distinguished troopers. Only this time

instead of relying on information from their handbook, they use THE JUNIOR WOODCHUCK APP – yes, the fabled manual of the Junior Woodchucks has gone digital. All the book's immense catalogue of knowledge has been shrunken down to fit on a cellphone app, accessible ONLY of course, to members of the Junior Woodchucks in good standing. Worthy Woodchucks can access the app, which produces the holographic projection of the app's creator, narrator and Grand Exalted Woodchuck Emeritus, Ranger J. Audubon Woodlore, or as he's known here, Woodlore 2.0. Rather than reading from a book, the app can tell Dewey, Huey and Louie what they need to know with information appearing in mid-air in front of them. It's the ducklings' version of Jarvis from the Iron Man movies. Of course, being modeled after the famous Ranger, the Woodlore 2.0 is also somewhat fussy and pedantic, and has a tendency to comically rattle on about some trivial bit of information when the ducks are in a potentially disastrous situation and need him to stick to the facts. Still, with a bit of prompting (or banging on a nearby rock) the app will almost always skip to the needed answer in the nick of time. (It may be worth noting that Woodlore's presence as a disembodied app here doesn't mean he has gone to that big campground in the sky. No indeed, he is still alive and well at Brownstone National Park, busying himself by continuously uploading new info. to the Woodchuck app, and keeping an eye on Humphrey the Bear. In other words, should we ever have to meet Woodlore in person, we can. Not likely, but we can.)

DONALD DUCK – The problem with Donald has always been that most people have a hard time understanding some of the things he says. Or ANY of the things he says. Yet, he has always been a big part of the Disney comic universe, and the chance exists for us to play him as a more active, comical part of our Ducktales series, provided there are story opportunities to service that, and other characters to cover what he says. There's a funny dynamic waiting to be explored in the Scrooge/Donald relationship. Scrooge is Mr. 24 hour workday and Donald is Mr. Month of Sundays. Scrooge would love it if Donald would step up and show some of that old fashioned Duck family gumption, but as long as there's a hammock hanging somewhere in Duckburg, Scrooge fears his easy-going nephew will be snoozing inside it. Huey, Dewey and Louie are caught in the middle of all this. While they still look forward to their regular sleepovers at Don's charmingly dilapidated bachelor house boat on Quackmire Marsh, they've also grown used to their football field-sized bedroom at Scrooge's mansion. It's not that they love Donald any less, it's that they feel they've moved on from sleeping in the tub in the houseboat's "guest room"/bathroom. Still D, H & L care about Donald a lot, and there could be some one-off comic episodes where they try to get Donald to do as Scrooge suggests and better his lot in life.

Of course Duckburg's number one troublemakers THE BEAGLE BOYS are still in business. Wherever there's dirty work afoot, you'll find the tracks lead back to Ma Beagle and her bilious brood of B-named badduns. She's even added a few masked faces to her band:

THE BEAGLE BRATS – Junior members of the family just as rotten as their adult counterparts. The brats are a special menace for Huey, Dewey, Louie and Webby as they

are the same ages as our heroes. They even have their own version of the Junior Woodchucks, a shifty, underhanded scout troop called the Juvenile Polecats.

BAD LUCK BEAGLE – A living jinx, a downtrodden Woody Allen-like schlemiel of a canine criminal. Just as Gladstone's good luck gives him a charmed life, Bad Luck Beagle brings misfortune to whoever is near him. If he shows up when the other Beagles are pulling a job, it's a sure bet the cops will appear as if from thin air to bust them. The trick is to plant Bad Luck somewhere his jinxes will work toward the other Beagles' advantage, such as inside Scrooge's money bin. The place will soon become a magnet for disaster, and once the place falls to pieces, all the other Beagles have to do is cart out the money!

BLACK SHEEP BEAGLE – The outcast of the Beagle clan, a good Beagle Boy! Black Sheep wears no mask and is always agreeable, helpful and worst of all, honest! He is forever trying to get his extended Beagle family to reform. In many ways the Beagles dread listening to Black Sheep's lectures more than they dread Bad Luck Beagle's jinxes.